

# West Virginia Riparian Forest Buffer Management/Maintenance Supplement

***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and  
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)***

## Definition

This job sheet provides management and maintenance requirements for a riparian forest buffer under a CRP or CREP contract. Program rules include specific guidance regarding how vegetative cover should be managed both during and after the establishment period. The following outlines this guidance:

## Management During the Establishment Period

For CRP or CREP, the Riparian Forest Buffer Conservation Practice Job Sheet and other applicable job sheets should be referenced for information on proper practice establishment.

The establishment period begins immediately following planting or the onset of natural regeneration and continues until NRCS signs the final status review indicating successful practice implementation. This period should normally extend one to three growing seasons beyond the planting date or upon initiation of natural regeneration.

Areas within the riparian forest buffer that were planted may require removal of weedy competition as needed until the practice is determined to be fully established.

Spot chemical control can also be used to control competition during the establishment period. All herbicides must be used according to label recommendations.

Spot mowing around trees and shrubs may also be done as needed until the stand is determined to be fully established. Herbicide applications on woody vegetation

must be according to West Virginia University Division of Forestry (WVDOF) or WVU Cooperative Extension Service (WVU-CES) recommendations.



Consult with a WVDOF service forester or a WVU-CES extension agent for recommendations prior to applying herbicide on woody vegetation established under a program contract.

Cost-share will only be paid for practices that are in the contract or are added prior to their installation. Practices in the conservation plan must be implemented within 12 months of the effective date of the contract. Extensions of up to 12 months are possible, but must be requested before the practice expires on the conservation plan. Requests for extensions are made at the local FSA office.

Requirements to reestablish vegetation on areas where establishment was unsuccessful will be determined through annual status reviews and will be based on whether the practice is functioning properly.

When using natural regeneration appropriate cover must be established within two years of the starting date of the contract or the landowner will be required to plant the area at his/her own cost.

## **Management After the Establishment Period:**

The guidance below applies on contract acreage after the planned cover is determined to be fully established. Refer to the NRCS "final" status review to determine when NRCS has rendered this determination.

When the planned cover is determined to be fully established, the following guidance applies:

1. The participant should make periodic checks of the enrolled acreage to assure that all practices are functioning properly.
2. Areas around trees and shrubs may be spot mowed when competition interferes with the desired vegetation. However, any spot mowing or chemical application to control noxious weeds or competition shall not occur during the primary ground nesting period between March 15 and July 15.
3. Haying and/or grazing operations are not permitted except during emergency situations as authorized by the Farm Service Agency.
4. Harvesting timber on contract acreage is not allowed during the contract period.
5. The participant is responsible for maintaining the riparian forest buffer according to the conservation plan throughout the contract period. This responsibility includes livestock exclusion and controlling soil erosion along with controlling diseases and pests to a level that does not adversely affect the long-term sustainability of the desired species.
6. Control of noxious or invasive plants (such as thistle, multiflora rose, autumn

olive, tartarian honeysuckle Johnsongrass, kudzu, etc), insects, and other pests to a level that prevents adverse impacts to the intent of the practice. Mowing and/or herbicide applications are not required as long as an approved cover is maintained.



7. Areas devoted to trees and/or shrubs should be checked periodically to determine survival, predation and vigor of desired species.
8. Tree protection devices and competition control methods should be checked to ensure they are functioning properly.

## **Additional Management Alternatives for Zone 3 When Established**

In addition to the minimum combined widths of zones 1 and 2 of the riparian forest buffer a zone 3 may also have been established in grasses. This zone may be mowed and fertilized (not harvested) to maintain a 20 foot wide perennial sod/herbaceous cover along the inside of any planned or existing fence.

## **Additional Assistance**

CREP is a voluntary program implemented through the combined efforts of various state and federal agencies. If you require further guidance please contact your local Farm Service Agency.